cross-cultural communication

If you're American...

- You know how baseball, basketball, and American football are played. If you're male, you can argue intricate points about their rules. On the other hand (and unless you're under about 20), you don't care that much for soccer.
- You count yourself fortunate if you get three weeks of vacation a year.

Figure Name Here

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If you died tonight...

- You're fairly likely to believe in God; if not, you've certainly been approached by people asking whether you know that you're going to Heaven.
- You think of McDonald's, Burger King, KFC etc. as cheap food.
- You probably own a telephone and a TV. Your place is heated in the winter and has its own bathroom. You do your laundry in a machine. You don't kill your own food. You don't have a dirt floor. You eat at a table, sitting on chairs.
- You don't consider insects, dogs, cats, monkeys to be food.
- A bathroom may not have a bathtub in it, but it certainly has a toilet.
- It seems natural to you that the telephone system, railroads, auto manufacturers, airlines, and power companies are privately run; indeed, you can hardly picture things working differently.
- You expect, as a matter of course, that the phones will work. Getting a new phone is routine.
- The train system, by contrast, isn't very good. Trains don't go any faster than cars; you're better off taking a plane.
- You expect the politicians to be responsive to business, strong on defense, and concerned with the middle class.
- Between "black" and "white" there are no other races. Someone with one black and one white parent looks black to you.
- You think most problems could be solved if only people would put aside their prejudices and work together.
- You take a strong court system for granted, even if you don't use it. You know that if you went into business and had problems with a customer, partner, or supplier, you could take them to court.
- You'd respect someone who speaks French, German, or Japanese-- but you very likely don't yourself speak them well enough to communicate with a monolingual foreigner.
- It's not all that necessary to learn foreign languages anyway. You can travel the continent using nothing but English-- and get by pretty well in the rest of the world.
- College is (normally, and excluding graduate study) four years long.

Everybody knows that

- Mustard comes in jars. Shaving cream comes in cans. Milk comes in plastic jugs or cardboard boxes, and occasionally in bottles.
- The date comes second: 11/22/63.
- The decimal point is a dot. Certainly not a comma.
- A billion is a thousand times a million.
- You expect marriages to be made for love, not arranged by third parties. Getting married by a judge is an option, but not a requirement; most marriages happen in church. You have a best man and a maid at the wedding-- a friend or a sibling. And, naturally, a man gets only one wife at a time.
- Once you're introduced to someone (well, besides the President and other lofty figures), you can call them by their first name.
- If you're a woman, you don't go to the beach topless.
- You'd rather a film be subtitled than dubbed (if you go to foreign films at all).
- You seriously expect to be able to transact business, or deal with the government, without paying bribes.
- If a politican has been cheating on his wife, you would question his ability to govern.
- Any store will take your credit card.
- Labor Day is in the fall.

Contributions to world civilization

- You've probably seen Star Wars, ET, Home Alone, Casablanca, and Snow White. If you're under forty, add Blazing Saddles, Terminator, Jaws, and 2001; otherwise, add Gone with the Wind, A Night at the Opera, Psycho, and Citizen Kane.
- You know the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Elvis, Michael Jackson, Simon & Garfunkel.
- You count on excellent medical treatment. You know you're not going to die of cholera or other Third World diseases. You expect very strong measures to be taken to save very ill babies or people in their eighties. You think dying at 65 would be a tragedy.
- Your country has never been conquered by a foreign nation.
- You're used to a wide variety of choices for almost anything you buy.
- You still measure things in feet, pounds, and gallons.

- You are not a farmer.
- The people who appear on the most popular talk shows are mostly entertainers, politicians, or rather strange individuals. Certainly not, say, authors.
- You drive on the right side of the road. You stop at red lights even if nobody's around. If you're a pedestrian and cars are stopped at a red light, you will fearlessly cross the street in front of them.
- You think of Canada as a pleasant, peaceful, but rather dull country.
- You consider the Volkswagen Beetle to be a small car.
- The police are armed, but not with submachine guns.
- If a woman is plumper than the average, it doesn't improve her looks.
- The biggest meal of the day is in the evening.
- There's parts of the city you definitely want to avoid at night.

- You feel that your kind of people aren't being listened to enough in Washington.
- You wouldn't expect both inflation and unemployment to be very high (say, over 15%) at the same time.
- You don't care very much what family someone comes from.
- The normal thing, when a couple dies, is for their estate to be divided equally among their children.
- You think of opera and ballet as rather elite entertainments. It's likely you don't see that many plays, either.
- Christmas is in the winter. You spend it with your family, give presents, and put up a tree.
- You may think the church is too powerful, or the state is; but you are used to not having a state church and don't think that it would be a good idea.
- You'd be hard pressed to name the capitals or the leaders of all the nations of Europe.
- Taxis are generally operated by foreigners, who are often ignorant about the city.
- You are distrustful of welfare and unemployment payments-- you think people should earn a living and not take handouts. But you would not be in favor of eliminating Social Security and Medicare.
- If you want to be a doctor, you need to get a bachelor's first.
- There sure are a lot of lawyers.

Space and time

- If you have an appointment, you'll mutter an excuse if you're five minutes late, and apologize profusely if it's ten minutes. An hour late is almost inexcusable.
- If you're talking to someone, you get uncomfortable if they approach closer than about two feet.
- About the only things you expect to bargain for are houses, cars, and antiques.
- Once you're past college, you very rarely simply show up at someone's place. People have to invite each other over-- especially if a meal is involved.
- When you negotiate, you are polite, of course, but it's only good business to 'play hardball'. Some foreigners pay excessive attention to status, or don't say what they mean, and that's exasperating.
- If you have a business appointment or interview with someone, you expect to have that person to yourself, and the business shouldn't take more than an hour or so.

The Role of Organizational Climate and Culture in the School Improvement Process: A Review of the Knowledge Base

The Importance of School Climate and Culture in the School Improvement Process: A Review of the Knowledge Base

It is essential to recognize that large-scale organizational improvement does not occur in a vacuum or sterile environment. It occurs in human systems, organizations, which already have beliefs, assumptions, expectations, norms, and values, both idiosyncratic to individual members of those organizations and shared. As this article attempts to explore, these shared cultural traits and individual perceptions of climate can greatly affect, and be affected by, the school improvement process.

Deal (1985, p. 303) referred to organizational culture as "the epicenter of change." Harris (2002) believed this so strongly that she asserted, "Successful school improvement can only occur when schools apply those strategies that best fit in their own context and particular developmental needs" (p. 4). Similar claims on the need to consider school climate and culture as part of the organizational change process are made by many of the leading authorities on school improvement, including Deal (1993), Deal and Peterson (1994), Hargreaves (1994), Harris (2002), Hopkins (2001), and Sarason (1996). Berman and McLaughlin (1978), Hopkins (2001), Rosenholtz (1989), and Stoll and Fink (1996) all demonstrated the pronounced effects of school climate and culture on the organizational change process. Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Deal and Peterson (1994) illustrated how dysfunctional school cultures, e.g., inward focus, short-term focus, low morale, fragmentation, inconsistency, emotional outbursts, and

subculture values that supercede shared organizational values, can impede organizational improvement.

However, not everyone agrees that organizational climate and culture are keys to organizational improvement. Barnard (1938) even challenged the rational existence of organizational culture, regarding it to be a social fiction created by individuals to give meaning to their work and to their lives. Deal (1993) viewed school culture and school improvement as contradictory, whereas the function of organizational culture is to provide stability school improvement implies large-scale change, which introduces disequilibrium and uncertainty. This disequilibrium, in turn, can cause organizational members to question the meaning of their work, as well as their commitment to the organization. As such, it is not feasible to consider large-scale school improvement without either working within the confines of the existing organizational climate and culture or attempting to modify them. However, some authorities in the field have questioned the extent to which it is possible to change the culture of an organization through careful planning (e.g., Quinn, 1980). Yet others (e.g., Allen, 1985) have allowed that although organizational climate and culture may be important to some organizational improvement processes, they are not particularly relevant to others. Finally, others (Sathe, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985) have questioned the extent to which attempting to make a major cultural change is worth the time, costs, and risks associated with that process. Overall, though, most modern theorists and reflective practitioners of school improvement recognize the important roles played by organizational culture and climate in the change process.

In order to assess the alignment of the existing school culture with the contemplated improvements or to attempt planned cultural interventions, it is first necessary to understand well the constructs of organizational climate and culture. The sections that follow provide a brief introduction to these complex and much-debated constructs.

Definition of Organizational Climate

Although the Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary (2005) provides no definition of climate that could reasonably be linked to organizations, Owens (2004) related it to such terms as atmosphere, personality, tone, or

ethos (p. 178). The foundational work in school climate is generally recognized as that of Halpin and Croft (1963), who roughly related their definition of climate to morale (p. 6), but admitted that time constraints restricted their consideration of that construct to the social interaction between the principal and the teachers (p. 7). Their research examined teacher disengagement from the teaching-learning process, the extent to which the principal burdens teachers with routine duties and demands, teachers' perceptions that their personal needs are being satisfied and they are accomplishing positive things in their work, teachers' enjoyment of friendly social relations with each other, principals' aloofness and reliance on rules and policies rather than informal contacts with teachers, closeness of supervision of teachers by the principal, teacher perceptions that the principal is working to move the organization in positive directions, and teacher perceptions that the principal treats them humanely. All of these factors combine to help define the climate of a school.

Many authors, including Schein (1992), have drawn sharp lines of demarcation between the constructs of organizational climate and culture. Rousseau (1990) differentiated between these two constructs on the basis of climate being the descriptive beliefs and perceptions individuals hold of the organization, whereas culture is the shared values, beliefs, and expectations that develop from social interactions within the organization. The boundaries between organizational climate and culture can appear to be artificial, arbitrary, and even largely unnecessary.

Tagiuri's systemic model (as cited in Owens, 2004) offers an interesting means for integrating these two constructs; he presented culture as one of four components of organizational climate, along with ecology, milieu, and organization or structure. Within his construct of organizational culture, he included assumptions, values, norms, beliefs, ways of thinking, behavior patterns, and artifacts; this definition seems to parallel closely many of the prominent authorities in the field. However, his construct of organizational climate tends to be more encompassing than that of many of his peers. Within the sub-component of ecology, he included buildings and facilities, technology, and pedagogical interventions. Within milieu, Tagiuri subsumed the race, ethnicity, socio-economic levels, and gender of organizational members and participants, their motivation and skills, and

the organization's leadership. His organization or structure construct includes communication and decision-making patterns within the organization, the organizational hierarchy and formal structures, and the level of bureaucratization. Although this definition is so comprehensive as to resemble French and Bell's (1998) organizational systems model and can somewhat blur the core definition of organizational climate, it serves as a good reminder of the interrelatedness of all these factors with organizational climate and culture. It also illustrates the broad range of organizational issues that must be taken into consideration when planning for large-scale organizational improvement.

Definitions of Organizational Culture

At culture's most global level, Merriam-Webster's On-Line Dictionary (2005) provides the following definition:

the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations; b : the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; c : the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a company or corporation.

As the focus narrows to organizational culture,there are seemingly as many definitions as there are authors attempting to define this construct. Probably the greatest overarching issue concerning the definition of an organizational culture centers around whether culture is a root metaphor or merely one aspect of the organization; in simpler terms, is culture what the organization is or is it something the organization has (Rousseau, 1990; Sathe, 1985; Thompson & Luthans, 1990)? The preponderance of opinion seems to fall on the side of culture being something that most organizations have.

Kilman, Saxton, and Serpa (1985b)provided an apt analogy that helps to illuminate the nature of organizational culture: "Culture is to the organization what personality is to the individual – a hidden, yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization" (p. ix). As such, it is emotional and intangible (Connor & Lake, 1988), individually and socially constructed (Hall & Hord, 2001; Rousseau, 1990), and evolves

over a period of years (Wilkins & Patterson, 1985), especially as organizations find acceptable and unacceptable solutions to internal and external problems or threats and attempt to integrate more effectively internally (Schein, 1985a, 1992). This culture can also be developed and learned by organizational members through the connection of behaviors and consequences and through multiple reinforcement mechanisms and agents (Thompson & Luthans, 1990). It can be learned through the reduction of anxiety and pain or through positive rewards and reinforcements (Schein, 1985a).

A fairly common, simplistic definition of organizational culture is "The way we do things around here." Although this statement appears in many books and articles, the earliest of such entries found by this author was by Deal (1993, p. 6). Deeper discussions expand this definition to cover such issues as the basic assumptions and beliefs shared by members of the organization regarding the nature of reality, truth, time, space, human nature, human activity, and human relationships (Schein, 1985a; 1985b). It also consists of the philosophies, ideologies, concepts, ceremonies, rituals, values, and norms shared by members of the organization that help shape their behaviors (Connor & Lake, 1988; Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985b; Owens, 2004; Rousseau, 1990). Among the norms it includes are task support norms, task innovation norms, social relationship norms, and personal freedom norms. Among the rituals are such issues as passage, degradation, enhancement, renewal, conflict resolution, and integration (Connor & Lake, 1988).

Organizational culture embraces such organizational needs as common language, shared concepts, defined organizational boundaries, methods for selecting members for the organization, methods of allocating authority, power, status, and resources, norms for handling intimacy and interpersonal relationships, criteria for rewards and punishments, and ways of coping with unpredictable and stressful events (Schein, 1985a). This shared culture helps to create solidarity and meaning and inspire commitment and productivity (Deal, 1985).

Culture may operate both consciously and sub-consciously in the organization (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1984, 1985a, 1985b; Wilkins &

Patterson, 1985). At the surface level, culture can be observed through examination of behaviors and artifacts, including such things as the physical setting, rituals, languages, and stories. At a slightly deeper, less conscious level, organizational culture is defined by the unwritten rules and norms of behavior, often conveyed by stories, rituals, language, and symbols. At the deepest levels, often totally sub-conscious, lie such things as the fundamental assumptions and core values of individuals, groups, and the organization (Connor & Lake, 1988). It is at this deepest level that the organizational culture can be most tenacious and most powerful (Wilkins & Patterson, 1985).

Culture is experienced differently by members of the organization (Rousseau, 1990). Sub-cultures may arise within an organization as small groups share values, perceptions, norms, or even ceremonies that differ from those of the wider organization (Cooper, 1988; Louis, 1985; Thompson & Luthans, 1990). For example, in many high schools, coaches of male athletic teams form a sub-culture within the faculty; they typically sit together at faculty meetings, generally at the back of the room. They often miss faculty meetings and are unable to participate in general faculty activities due to their coaching obligations immediately after school. They can often be observed commenting and joking among themselves at times when other faculty members are more attentively engaged with the content of the faculty meeting. Similarly, new faculty members may form a sub-culture somewhat distinct from those who have been in the school for a prolonged period of time.

Culture is also contextually influenced. It is the interaction of an organization's people variables with physical and structural (ecological) variables (Hall & Hord, 2001). For example, many high schools are built in a design in which hallways radiate from a central hub; in these schools, it is very common for the teachers in each hallway to build a culture slightly different from the culture of teachers in hallways with whom they have less personal contact. School culture can be influenced by such physical surrounding variables as noise, heat, and light (Thompson & Luthans, 1990). The open classroom designs popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s promoted more sharing and contact among teachers than fully-walled individual classrooms. Learning cultures among students in the Southern

and Southwestern United States have changed significantly with the addition of air conditioning to classrooms.

As far back as 1932, Waller noted that "schools have a culture that is definitely their own" (p. 103). Waller went on to describe the rituals of personal relationships, the folkways, mores, irrational sanctions, moral codes, games, ceremonies, traditions, and laws that were so very similar in many schools and which define what happens in schools. This perspective of a shared culture among schools has been commented on by many observers of the sociology of schools, including Deal (1993), Sarason (1996), and Swidler (1979). From this author's conversations with educators and students around the globe and observations in schools internationally, there is a basic culture of schooling that transcends national, ethnic, and socio-cultural borders. International exchange students often express how similar their host school is to their school in their native country. In this author's experience, in developing nations there is often a greater cultural similarity between the private schools serving the more wealthy students and sub-urban schools in the U. S. than there is between those private schools and the public schools serving their nation's poorer children. However, as Deal (1993) and Maehr and Buck (1993) commented, each school also possesses individualized, unique cultural aspects. Schools have distinct personalities, highly unique ceremonies, and varying discipline norms. Some schools revere their athletic teams, whereas in other schools art, music, or drama programs are given great attention; in yet other schools, academic achievement is at the apex of community respect. Organizational culture can be a highly powerful force in the school improvement process; given this definition of culture, it stands to reason that, as Owens (2004) noted, it may often be the most powerful determinant of the course of change in an organization (p. 191).

Equipped with an understanding of the basic constructs of organizational climate and culture, the next challenge facing the leader of a school improvement process becomes the assessment of his or her school's climate and culture. As Schein (1999, p. 86) noted pointedly, assessment of organizational climate and culture must be done in the specific context of some organizational problem or set of circumstances. Consequently, the assessment of the school's climate and culture must be done specifically in

the context of the proposed change(s) and improvement process. The section that follows provides some methodological insight into that assessment process.

How Can One Assess an Organization's Climate and Culture?

It is generally agreed that assessment of an organization's climate is a relatively straight-forward process, especially when compared to the methodologies needed to assess the organization's culture. As climate is defined as individuals' perceptions, quantitative survey instruments have become the most widely accepted means of gathering and analyzing organizational climate data. The same is not true for the assessment of school culture; in fact, various authorities in the field (e.g., Schein, 1999) assert that it absolutely cannot be measured quantitatively through surveys or questionnaires.

Assessment of school climate. A great variety of instruments have been developed to measure organizational climate. The first of these to gain wide acceptance was Halpin and Croft's (1963) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ, Form IV). This 64-item climate assessment tool is comprised of 8 sub-scales relating teachers' behavior to that of the principal: (a) disengagement, (b) hindrance, (c) spirit, (d) intimacy, (e) aloofness, (f) production emphasis, (g) thrust, and (h) consideration. In examining the climates of 71 schools, Halpin and Croft found that their scores clustered into six major climatic types: (a) open, (b) autonomous, (c) controlled, (d) familiar, (e) paternal, and (f) closed.

Perhaps the most widely used school climate surveys are those published by the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) (2005). One reason for the widespread popularity of these surveys is the fact that NSSE will also tabulate, analyze, and report on their results, saving the building level administrator or district staff from these time consuming, and somewhat confusing, processes. Also, these surveys are available in both paper and on-line formats, allowing the school to choose the most appropriate technology for the participants being surveyed. Comparable forms exist for elementary school students, middle school students, high school students, teachers, English-speaking parents, Spanish-speaking parents, and

community members. The surveys are predominantly Likert scale-based, but also allow for minor amounts of open-ended input.

Another major set of climate assessment instruments comes from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Their Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) School Climate Surveys (1987) collect data on ten sub-scales: (a) teacher-student relationships, (b) security and maintenance, (c) administration, (d) student academic orientation, (e) student behavioral values, (f) guidance, (g) student-peer relationships, (h) parent and community-school relationships, (i) instructional management, and (j) student activities. The information gathered through this instrument is supplemented by separate satisfaction surveys for parents, teachers, and students. Much of the information on these satisfaction surveys is comparable across groups (e.g., questions on student activities or school buildings, supplies, and upkeep), but some of it is unique to the specific group being surveyed (e.g., parents and teachers report on their satisfaction with the administration of the school, whereas students report on their satisfaction with the teachers). As with the NSSE instrumentation, NASSP offers scoring and reporting services for these surveys, including allowing the school to ask "what if" questions related to the six sub-scales, e.g., "What would it take for any school to raise student satisfaction by 10%?" (NASSP, 2005).

Assessment of school culture. Unlike the assessment of school climate, which is generally accepted to be a straightforward quantitative process, assessment of school culture is far more complex. Two basic schools of thought exist regarding appropriate means of assessing school cultures. On one hand, Schein (1999) categorically refuted that culture can be assessed through written questionnaires or surveys, asserting that the assessor would neither know what to ask nor be able to judge the reliability or validity of the responses. Rousseau (1990), on the other hand, allowed that such quantitative tools as Q-sorts and questionnaires can legitimately be utilized, in conjunction with structured interviews, to assess organizational culture.

Such quantitative survey instruments for assessing organizational culture are readily available, e.g., Kilmann and Saxton's Culture Gap Survey (1991). However, these instruments tend to be superficial and are incapable

of probing the depth and uniqueness of an organization's culture. As Rousseau (1990) commented, the uniqueness of each organization's culture prevents outsiders from forming valid a priori questions. Schein (1984) further noted that using surveys to assess culture violates ethical research procedures in that it puts words into the mouths of respondents rather than captures their own words. Also, such instruments summarize and aggregate responses, possibly misrepresenting the respondents' true views.

Because organizational culture is a multi-layered phenomenon, different data gathering approaches may be necessary to assess the various layers. Rousseau (1990) identified five basic layers of organizational culture, proceeding from the most superficial and observable to the most profound, yet least revealed or discussed. These layers were: (a) artifacts, (b) patterns of behavior, (c) behavioral norms, (d) values, and (e) fundamental assumptions. Connor and Lake (1988) discussed the same concepts but classified culture into three layers, rather than five.

At its shallowest levels, school culture is open to assessment by observation of behaviors and interactions, listening to stories, participating in rituals, and examining artifacts and written communications. To understand the shared values, common understandings, and patterns of expectations, it is necessary to probe more deeply and into subconscious areas by examining the authentic responses of organization members. Rousseau (1990) and Schein (1999) advocated the use of structured interviews to gather these data. Schein noted that small group interviews are both more valid and efficient than individual interviews. However, to get at the deepest levels of shared culture, assumptions and beliefs, intensive individual interviews are probably the most appropriate approach.

As with all qualitative research, it is essential that organizational leaders set aside their own conceptions and values as they attempt to discern the shared values and beliefs of others in the organization (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1999). However, the leader's observations of behaviors and artifacts can legitimately provide the initial entry point that leads to a deeper investigation of the underlying shared values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions.

With these definitions of organizational climate and culture and some insight into how to assess these constructs, the leader's next challenge is to forecast how the school's culture and climate will interact with the school improvement process. The section that follows explores various possible patterns of interaction.

Interaction of School Climate and Culture with the School Improvement Process

A school's culture and climate can interact with the school improvement process in many ways and in all phases of that improvement process. Figure 1 illustrates a typical school improvement process, which progresses from a planning phase to implementation, and eventually to institutionalization of the desired changes. As Beach and Lindahl (2004b) discussed, in reality, school improvement processes are not as linear as diagrams such as Figure 1 suggest. However, the basic phases of the model offer a useful structure for examining potential interactions between the process and the school's climate and culture.

Interactions in the Planning Phase

The initial step in the planning phase of the school improvement process involves identifying an organizational need and making a conscious decision whether or not to attempt to address that need. Both the climate and the culture of the school can have considerable influence at this stage. For example, if the current climate of the school is one of high disengagement, high hindrance, and low espirit (Halpin & Croft, 1963), it is unlikely that the school will voluntarily opt to engage in a significant school improvement process; if forced to, it is unlikely that the effort will succeed. Similarly, if the school's culture is one of cultural malaise (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), it is unlikely that the school improvement process will progress beyond this initial step. Conversely, healthier climates and more positive cultures with a history of successful large-scale organizational change will greatly enhance the probability that the school will opt to move ahead with the school improvement plan.

The next step in the planning phase is to consider the nature of the changes inherent in the improvement process. It is essential that the school

improvement process, and even the specific improvements and reforms being contemplated, match those climates and cultures (Hopkins, Harris, Singleton, & Watts, 2000; Sathe, 1985), for culture affects organizational behavior and performance, thereby shaping the impact and direction of changes (Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985a). If the changes contemplated are not in good alignment with the current culture and climate of the school, e.g., the existing customs, power structures, and paths of least resistance of the organization (Connor & Lake, 1988), planned cultural intervention is necessary (Burke, 2002). In such cases, it is essential to understand the existing organizational culture, to know its source and bounds (Lorsch, 1985). This helps to ensure that changes are made only to the aspects of that culture that are at odds with the change, not the benign aspects.

When change is contemplated, certain key questions need to be asked, including: Which aspects of the organizational culture are most compatible with the proposed change? Which aspects of that culture are least compatible with the change? How deeply entrenched are these aspects of the culture? How might the proposed change affect people's perceptions of the organizational climate? How great a change in climate is likely be perceived as a consequence of implementing this change? Which aspects of the new climate might be perceived as becoming more positive, or more negative? How strongly might these changes in perceptions affect individuals? Which individuals?

Even these understandings may not be useful in helping to change the culture, but they can help to shape or select strategies that have a greater probability of implementation and institutionalization (Schein, 1985a, 1985b). As Sathe (1985) noted, the selection of strategies should be based on questions such as: Can the desired results be obtained without changing the culture, or by utilizing the latent potential of the existing culture? If not, can they be obtained by moving toward more intrinsically appealing beliefs rather than characterizing the change as focusing on beliefs more alien to the existing culture? The weaker the organizational culture or the fewer and less central the assumptions of an organizational culture that need to be modified, the more likely it is that the planned improvement can be effectively achieved (Sathe, 1985), for changes in culture can create a sense

of loss and even the potential loss of the meaning of one's work in the organization (Allen, 1985; Deal, 1985).

In 1990, Roland Barth presented a bold statement on school improvement: "What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of inter-personal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences" (p. 45). In those instances where the major changes needed are to the school culture, itself, an in-depth understanding of the organizational culture, and sub-cultures, is even more essential. Organizational cultures can be changed, over time, but the more entrenched and more widely shared the culture, the more difficult it is to effect deep or lasting change. It is necessary to diagnose the culture carefully and focus on modifying only very specific key values or assumptions, not the entire culture (Harris, 2002).

The next step in the planning stage of the school improvement process is for the organization to select a planning approach (see Beach, 1993) appropriate to the specific school improvement under consideration and to the organizational conditions, including its climate and culture. Many schools assume that some form of the traditional rational planning process (Brieve, Johnson, & Young, 1958; Kaufman, 1972), e.g., the strategic planning approach, is the preferred model for guiding school improvement efforts Bryson, 1995; Cook, 1990). Although in certain circumstances this assumption is correct, there are many instances in which alternative planning approaches would be more appropriate. Beach and Lindahl (2004a) discussed how Lindblom's (1959) incremental planning model, Etzioni's (1967) mixed-scanning model, and developmental or goal-free planning models (Clark, 1981; McCaskey, 1974) complement rational planning approaches.

In large measure, the culture and climate of the school are factors that must be considered in this decision. As Clark (1981) noted, school cultures tend to be more a loose collection of ideas than a highly coherent structure (see, also, Lonsdale, 1986) and that it is unreasonable to assume high levels of consensus on goals. The technology of instruction is largely unclear, even among the teachers of a given school. Schools tend to operate more on a trial-and-error basis than through scientific design (Clark, p. 49). These

qualities are all contradictory to the requisites of the rational planning model. Clark's assessment was seconded by Walter (1983), whose case study findings concluded that organizational behavior is not necessarily guided by formal goals and objectives, but by organizational culture (see, also, Lonsdale, 1986).

Walter (1983) tied these findings to McCaskey's (1974) earlier conclusions that goal-based planning narrows the focus and limits the flexibility of the organizational. Toll (1982) posited that rational, quantitatively based planning often neglects the human aspects of the organization and the changing environment. Larson (1982) concluded that rational models focus on the future, whereas, in reality, most people in the organization are focused on the present. In short, for many school improvement efforts goals are sufficiently diverse, the future is sufficiently uncertain, and the actions necessary to obtain the goals sufficiently unclear that goal-based, rational planning may well not be effective, efficient, or appropriate (Clark, 1981).Consequently, Walter (1983) suggested that a more intuitive, climate and culture-based planning approach might be more effective, particularly when the conditions facing the school are unstable or uncertain. Such a directional planning approach would allow the school leader to accommodate alternative preferences, means, and values within the school culture, thereby managing potential conflict.

McCaskey (1974) discussed how to plan without goals, beginning with the identification of arenas of activity and preferred behavior patterns within the organizational culture that relate to the contemplated organizational improvement. The lead would also strive to discern which recent activities or events were pleasing to the school's members, so that implementation activities could be designed of a similar nature. Once these shared arenas of activity and preferences have been identified, the leader can shape the implementation process in directions consonant with "who they are and what they like to do" (McCaskey, 1974, p. 283). This reduces resistance and does not limit individualism nearly as much as the rational, goal-based approach. It also allows for greater flexibility in adapting to the changing environment.

After a planning approach has been selected, the next step in this initial phases of the school improvement process is to assess the school's capacity and willingness to change (Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder, 1993; Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Cunningham et al., 2002; Fullan, 1991; Hall & Hord, 2001; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990; Pond, Armenakis, & Green, 1984; Prochaska et al., 1994; Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 1997); this is often referred to as organizational readiness for change. Again, readiness for change is, in good measure, a function of the school's climate and culture (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Cunningham et al., 2002; Evans, 2001; Maurer, 2001; Pond, Armenakis, & Green, 1984). Fullan (1991) found that those schools whose culture is compatible with change, in general, and with the specific changes involved in the current school improvement project, are most likely to be successful in their improvement effort.

The final step in the planning phase of the school improvement process is to decide to move ahead with implementation, undertake some organizational development prior to implementation, or to terminate the school improvement process, at least for the present time. As with the decisions made to this point in the process, the school's culture and climate may well be major factors in this decision. If extensive changes in culture would be necessary before implementation could be attempted or if the school's climate were not conducive to undertaking a major change effort, it is likely that the decision would be to abort the school improvement process. On the other hand, if the school's culture were largely compatible with the planned changes and if the climate were healthy, these might tip the scale in favor of proceeding either with some organizational development or directly with the implementation of the planned changes.

Interactions in the Implementation Phase

During the implementation phase of most school improvement processes, three major elements take center stage: (a) change, (b) motivation, and (c) professional development. All three affect, and are affected by, the school's climate and culture.

Clearly not all changes are of the same magnitude. It is easier to change a person's perceptions or knowledge than his or her behavior; it is typically easier to change an individual's behavior than that of an organization. In general, the most difficult change would be to change the values, assumptions, and beliefs of an organization – in other words, its culture. Consequently, the extent that the school improvement effort depends on changes to the organizational culture has a pronounced influence on the probability of its successful implementation. As discussed earlier, the more deeply held and shared those values, assumptions, and beliefs, the more difficult they are to modify.

The organization's culture clearly shapes the implementation process. Implementation actions must be crafted to conform to, or at least be relatively acceptable to, the existing culture, as much as possible, without negating important aspects of the planned changes. Often the framing, or even sequencing, of aspects of the implementation process can be adjusted to be less threatening to the culture. In other instances, the proposed changes are sufficiently in conflict with the organizational culture as to necessitate cultural shaping or modification. In such cases, it is essential that the timeline for implementation be adjusted accordingly. Cultural change is not something to be attempted in the short term

As the implementation phase unfolds, the organization progresses through several phases (see Evans, 2001), each of which can threaten the stability of the organizational culture. During the unfreezing stage, the organization may suffer anxiety about the coming changes and guilt for feel this anxiety. The cultural safety of the organization may be challenged. The organization often experiences a sense of loss, often of cherished cultural perceptions and behaviors, and at other times, more seriously, of shared values, beliefs, or fundamental assumptions. For the implementation to be successful, the organization and its culture must move from this sense of loss to one of commitment to the new behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs.

It is at this stage that organizational climate, and specifically motivation, may assume a significant role. If the climate is healthy and positive in relation to the change(s), implementation is facilitated. If the climate is dysfunctional or negative regarding the change(s), motivation must be

improved before it is likely that implementation and institutionalization will be successful.

Often, the lack of motivation can be tied to what Evans (2001) termed the need to "move from old competence to new competence" (p. 56); this is generally best done in schools through staff development. Staff development is readily influenced by the organization's climate and culture. What a joy it can be to be a facilitator of staff development in a school with a healthy, open climate, welcoming to the development of new knowledge, skills, and dispositions. It is a fruitless, thankless role in a school with a negative, closed climate. School culture also plays a significant role in regard to staff development. How deeply is staff development valued? By whom (e.g., subgroups)? How well is it, or the changes expected from it, rewarded? Who are the early adopters of new practices? Who are the late adopters? How is each group treated by their peers and by the organization's leadership?

Some school leaders have attempted to change their school's culture and climate directly through staff development; this is unlikely to be successful other than for the most insignificant of changes. Over a long period of time, though, culture and climate may be shaped, as an indirect consequence of staff development. As teachers build the new skills to implement the planned improvements, they can gain the self-confidence and success motivation to change the climate. As enough teachers have success with new behaviors, this may change related underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions, i.e., the organizational culture.

The final step of the implementation phase is to move from conflict to consensus, generating widespread support for the change (Evans, 2001, p. 56). Again, this is shaping the culture of the organization. It is essential that most members of the organization not only accept and practice the new behaviors required by the school improvement, but also develop the corresponding values, assumptions, and beliefs. The more deeply rooted and widespread the values, assumptions, and beliefs, the more resistant they are. In cases of significant changes, this process can easily take years, if it is successful at all. This process begins in the implementation phase of the

school improvement process, but culminates in the institutionalization phase.

Interactions in the Institutionalization Phase

Simply stated, it is in the institutionalization phase that the organization's culture has transformed to incorporate the behaviors, values, assumptions, and beliefs inherent in the planned school improvement(s). These now become the organization's culture!

When stated so concisely, this may appear to be a far more simple process than it is. As French and Bell (1998) explicated, changes in one aspect of an organization can well necessitate modification of other aspects of the organization before those changes can be institutionalized successfully. Such processes are often referred to as organizational development. Cultural changes may well require changes in the organizational structure, reward systems, technology, or tasks (see Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002). Burke (1993), French, Bell, and Zawacki (1999), and Tichy (1983) offered good discussions of the systemic nature of organizational development, whereas Fullan, Miles, and Taylor (1978) provided insight into how these processes work in K-12 schools. The extent to which the culture of a school may be shaped to be compatible with the desired changes and the extent to which all sub-systems of the organization are brought into harmony with both the culture and the changes are essential factors in the institutionalization of those changes. The section that follows offers some insight into how the shaping of organizational culture and climate has been accomplished successfully.

Shaping School Culture and Climate to Facilitate Improvement

Many school leaders have consciously recognized the need to change the climate and/or culture of their school and have set out to do so. In the private sector, some organizations have taken what may be the most direct approach – removing certain members of the organization and selecting and socializing new members of the organization who already have values and belief systems consonant with the desired culture. In schools, however, tenure or continuing contract laws, student and teacher rights, community pressure, and a host of other factors mitigate against this as a feasible

approach (see, also, Maehr & Buck, 1993 and Sathe, 1985 for further discussions on the limitations of this approach). This approach to cultural change clearly falls into the trap identified by Wilkins and Patterson (1985), who sagely noted that many approaches to cultural change are too simplistic and promise too much.

As Wilkins and Patterson (1985) noted, organizational culture changes are generally neither wholly revolutionary nor evolutionary. This recalls Chin and Benne's (1969) three approaches to change: (a) power/coercive; (b) empirical/rational; and (c) normative/re-educative. When applied to changing climates and cultures, all three can be utilized. The first two approaches can be utilized to change behaviors, which both Burke (2002) and Kilman, Saxton, and Serpa (1985) recommended as the starting point in cultural change. However, power/coercive changes are more likely to result in compliance, not true cultural change. Once behavior has been changed, it is necessary to address the deeper, more change-resistant levels of the culture, e.g., values and beliefs. To make changes at these levels, normative/re-educative approaches are needed.

Normative/re-educative approaches to cultural change require extended periods of time and sustained, virtually daily, efforts by those leading the school improvement effort. As many authorities on organizational culture note, one of the primary ways leaders can gradually accomplish normative/re-educative change is simply through the deliberate, consistent attention they focus on specific behaviors, values and fundamental assumptions (Allen, 1985; Deal, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Harris, 2002; Schein, 1993). Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbeck (1999) discussed the importance of clarifying shared beliefs and values and motivating by moral imperatives. Deal and Peterson (1999) and Schein (1985b; 1992) emphasized the importance of clarifying shared beliefs and values and of motivating by moral imperatives. Deal and Peterson (1993) and Schein (1992) added discussions on the essentiality of leaders modeling behaviors and values, consistently. This modeling is especially essential as leaders deal with organizational crises (Schein, 1992) or handle conflict (Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992).

As part of this process, individuals within the organization must be repeatedly offered invitations to participate in the new culture, encouraged to experiment with new behaviors in an unthreatening atmosphere that accepts failure as part of the process, and empowered to help shape the culture and the organization (Allen, 1985; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Harris, 2002; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbeck, 1999; Maher & Buck, 1993).

Leaders of school improvement processes can help to change the organizational culture through the carefully selective telling of stories, emphasizing heroes and heroines whose actions exemplify the beliefs, values, and assumptions fundamental to the desired changes (Deal, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992). Positive stories of heroes and heroines are generally regarded as more effective than negative stories about organizational members or stakeholders who have acted in ways contrary to the desired cultural mores and norms. Deal (1993) extended this storytelling responsibility of leaders to working with the "informal network of priests, gossips, and storytellers" (p. 17) of the school culture.

On a more formal basis, one of the most commonly cited approaches to effecting cultural change in organizations is through the modification or creation of organizational rites and rituals that emphasize and celebrate the major beliefs, values, and fundamental assumptions associated with the desired school improvement (Deal, 1993; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992). Among the organizational subsystems that might be affected by, and affect, the cultural changes are: (a) rewards (Allen, 1985; Schein, 1992); (b) information and communication systems (Allen, 1985; Schein, 1992); (c) training (Allen, 1985); (d) recruitment, selection, and orientation (Allen, 1985; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992); (e) organizational structure and design (Schein, 1992); and (f) formal statements of philosophy, values, creed, goals, or vision (Schein, 1992).

Summary and Closure

School culture and climate are integral components of the school improvement process. They affect decisions throughout all phases of that process. In turn, they are affected by the decisions made in all phases of the process. Although amorphous and complex enough to cause both contradictory and confusing discussions in the professional knowledge

base, culture and climate are very real, very powerful forces in organizations. Although difficult to measure precisely, both constructs can be discerned within an organization if the evaluator has sufficient time and access to witness the daily behaviors of members of the organization and probe deeply as to the values, beliefs, and fundamental assumptions underlying those behaviors. Leaders of school improvement processes can utilize the information gained through the assessment of the school's climate and culture to help guide each phase of the change process, from determining the school's readiness for change to selecting the types of improvements most likely to be compatible with the organization's climate and culture, from implementing the improvements to ensuring that they become institutionalized. Despite considerable discussion in the professional knowledge base as to how feasible it is to make significant changes in a school's climate or culture, in some cases it is the climate or culture, itself, which most needs to be changed if true school improvement is to occur. Through judicious use, over time, of power/coercive, rational/empirical, and, primarily, normative/re-educative change strategies, school leaders can shape and develop cultures and climates that are in harmony with, and supportive of, the desired organizational changes.

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